



## THE PRUDENTIAL SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY AWARDS

HONORING OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICE BY YOUNG AMERICANS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 7, 2012

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### **VERMONT'S TOP TWO YOUTH VOLUNTEERS SELECTED IN 17<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL NATIONAL AWARDS PROGRAM**

**Cornwall and Shelburne students earn \$1,000 awards,  
engraved medallions and trip to nation's capital**

**Honors also bestowed on youth volunteers in Essex Junction and Belmont**

MONTPELIER, Vt. – Emery Tillman, 17, of Cornwall and Todd Boisjoli, 13, of Shelburne today were named Vermont's top two youth volunteers for 2012 by The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, a nationwide program honoring young people for outstanding acts of volunteerism. Emery was nominated by Middlebury Union High School in Middlebury, and Todd was nominated by Shelburne Community School in Shelburne. The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, now in its 17th year, is conducted by Prudential Financial in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP).

Emery, a senior at Middlebury Union High School, has undertaken a variety of volunteer activities as she has traveled around the United States and the world competing in freestyle kayaking events. As a whitewater kayaker, Emery is very sensitive to the condition of the world's waterways, and initially just wanted to clean up river trash. But after helping to organize a cleanup project on the Ottawa River with her boarding school, "I knew I had to continue giving back to the community, wherever that community may be," she said.

So, she has found ways to make a difference everywhere she travels. In Chile, she taught English to middle school students. In Zambia, she helped prepare meals and coached soccer at an orphanage. In Uganda, she volunteered at a malaria clinic. In New Zealand, she participated in a river

cleanup. And in the U.S., Emery has organized trash removal projects in most of the rivers where she has competed. In addition, she has worked with a program that encourages young people to choose outdoor activities instead of drugs, and participated in a project to keep trash out of the ocean and Lake Champlain.

Todd, an eighth-grader at Shelburne Community School, has been an active volunteer since he was 5 years old by helping out at his school and by contributing in important ways to the broader community. Todd's volunteerism began when his mother suggested that he help with a fundraiser for the Vermont Children's Trust Foundation. He then began looking for ways to make a difference at school.

Over the years, Todd has helped organize school fundraisers, managed the school store, assisted with the elementary school lunch program, participated in a recycling program, educated students about the dangers of drugs and alcohol and worked on other volunteer initiatives as a member of his school's student leadership council. Outside of school, Todd helps referee soccer games in his community and teaches soccer skills to those who want to learn to play. In addition, Todd recently shoveled mud out of homes devastated by Hurricane Irene. Todd said volunteering has given him "a view of how lucky my life is compared to other people in the world. I learned how even doing a few hours of work can make a huge difference to the people who needed the help."

As State Honorees, Emery and Todd each will receive \$1,000, an engraved silver medallion, and an all-expense-paid trip in early May to Washington, D.C., where they will join the top two honorees from each of the other states and the District of Columbia for several days of national recognition events. Ten of them will be named America's top youth volunteers for 2012 at that time.

### Distinguished Finalists

In addition, the program judges recognized two other Vermont students as Distinguished Finalists for their impressive community service activities. Each will receive an engraved bronze medallion:

Alison Cook, 17, of Essex Junction, Vt., a senior at Essex High School, a passionate volunteer and co-chair of the community service committee at her school, has coordinated numerous volunteer activities for students. In addition, as team captain of her school's environmental club, Alison has helped to plant more than 200 trees along a local river with money raised from a recycling program.

Lucey Gagner, 17, of Belmont, Vt., a senior at Black River High School in Ludlow, purchases food, prepares a meal, and shares that meal once a month with the residents at Dismas House, a halfway house. Lucey, who is a passionate volunteer with many organizations, feels that she makes a tremendous difference at Dismas House by serving the meal, as well as sitting at the same table and sharing conversation with those who need friendship and support.

"Through their selfless acts of service, these award recipients have greatly improved the lives of others," said Prudential Chairman and CEO John Strangfeld. "We hope their stories and their dedication inspire other young people to do the same."

"We are so pleased to celebrate these student volunteers," said JoAnn Bartoletti, executive director of NASSP. "It's important to highlight them as powerful examples of how young people can make a difference."

#### About The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards

The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards represents the United States' largest youth recognition program based solely on volunteer service. All public and private middle level and high schools in the country, as well as all Girl Scout councils, county 4-H organizations, American Red Cross chapters, YMCAs and affiliates of HandsOn Network, were eligible to select a student or member for a local Prudential Spirit of Community Award. More than 5,000 Local Honorees were then reviewed by an independent judging panel, which selected State Honorees and Distinguished Finalists based on criteria including personal initiative, creativity, effort, impact and personal growth.

While in Washington, D.C., the 102 State Honorees – one middle level and one high school student from each state and the District of Columbia – will tour the capital's landmarks, attend a gala awards ceremony at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, and visit their congressional representatives on Capitol Hill. In addition, 10 of them – five middle level and five high school students – will be named National Honorees on May 7. These honorees will receive additional \$5,000 awards, gold medallions, crystal trophies and \$5,000 grants from The Prudential Foundation for nonprofit charitable organizations of their choice.

Since the program began in 1995, more than 100,000 young volunteers nationwide have been honored by The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards at the local, state or national level. The program also is conducted by Prudential subsidiaries in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Ireland and India. In addition to granting its own awards, The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program also distributes President's Volunteer Service Awards to qualifying Local Honorees on behalf of President Barack Obama.

For information on all of this year's Prudential Spirit of Community State Honorees and Distinguished Finalists, visit <http://spirit.prudential.com> or [www.nassp.org/spirit](http://www.nassp.org/spirit).

**About NASSP**

NASSP is the leading organization of and national voice for middle level and high school principals, assistant principals, and all school leaders from across the United States and more than 45 countries around the world. The association provides research-based professional development and resources, networking and advocacy to build the capacity of middle level and high school leaders to continually improve student performance. Reflecting its longstanding commitment to student leadership development as well, NASSP administers the National Honor Society, National Junior Honor Society, National Elementary Honor Society and National Association of Student Councils. For more information about NASSP, located in Reston, VA, visit [www.nassp.org](http://www.nassp.org).

**About Prudential Financial**

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*Editors: Graphics depicting the award program's logo and medallions may be downloaded from [spirit.prudential.com](http://spirit.prudential.com).*